H74

THE UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL COUNCIL

A Nation Remembers

READEX FICHE

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Q *What is the United States Holocaust Memorial Council?*

A The Council is an independent federal organization created by Congress in 1980. It consists of 55 members of all faiths and backgrounds appointed by the President, five United States Senators and five members of the House of Representatives. In addition, there are advisory boards of prominent professionals, academicians, educators and humanitarians. The Council is responsible for planning, constructing and, through its national campaign organization, A Campaign to Remember, raising funds for the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The Council also sponsors the annual national civic commemoration of Days of Remembrance in Washington, D.C. and encourages, with materials and information, similar commemorations in every state capital and by local civic, educational and religious institutions throughout the United States.

The Chairman of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council is Elie Wiesel, the distinguished human rights activist, author, teacher and concentration camp survivor.

Q *What is the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum?*

A The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum will tell the story of the Holocaust in all its dimensions and will memorialize the six million Jews, including more than one million Jewish children, who were systematically annihilated in the Holocaust. It also will memorialize the millions of others who suffered torment and death throughout the countries occupied by Germany during World War II. The Nazis killed and enslaved political activists and anti-Nazi intellectuals of more than 20 nationalities. They persecuted priests and patriots, cultural and political leaders in Poland, Holland, France, Norway, Greece, Czechoslovakia, the Ukraine, and the other countries they invaded. Many Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals and Gypsies also were persecuted or marked for annihilation. The murderous zeal of Nazi brutality finally reached its depths in the concentration camps of Buchenwald, Bergen-Belsen, Auschwitz, and Dachau, and Treblinka, Belzec, and Sobibor, and other crematoria and death camps.

Q *Why are we building a Holocaust museum in the United States? After all, the Holocaust happened in Europe.*

A President Ronald Reagan has said "We build today for our posterity. With our children and our children's children in mind, we are creating on this spot a place of remembrance and mourning. . . . When in the years to come, our children emerge from this museum with the lessons of totalitarianism fresh in their minds, those soaring white monuments to democracy, justice and freedom under God will gleam all the more brightly in the sunlight of freedom."

As President Carter noted: "Although the Holocaust took place in Europe, the event is of fundamental significance to Americans for three reasons. First, it was American troops who liberated many of the death camps, and who helped to expose the horrible truth of what had been done there. Also, the United States became a homeland for many of those who were able to survive. Secondly, however, we must share the responsibility for not being willing to acknowledge forty years ago that this horrible event was occurring. Finally, because we are humane people, concerned with the human rights of all peoples, we feel compelled to study the systematic destruction of the Jews so that we may seek to learn how to prevent such enormities from occurring in the future."

Columnist George Will answers the question this way: ". . . no other nation has broader, graver responsibilities in the world so no other nation more needs citizens trained to look life in the face. . . . The Holocaust museum, located at the epicenter of our collective life, can be a mind-opening reminder of the furies beyond our shores."

Q *Where in Washington will the Museum be located?*

A The site, on federal land, is located between 14th and 15th Streets, in the shadow of the Washington Monument and close to the Smithsonian and other museums on the Mall.

Q *How will the Museum be organized?*

A The Museum will integrate the crucial roles of remembrance, teaching, and documenting both history and human response. Commemoration, bearing witness, education and research each will be expressed in separate halls, permanent and changing exhibit areas, and information resources. These resources, by virtue of their electronic formats, will be readily accessible to visitors, scholars, colleges, schools, and homes throughout the United States and abroad.

Q *What programs will the Museum offer?*

A The Museum will support the highest level of academic research, curriculum development and teacher training services. The archival, artifact and library collections will provide fundamental resources for visitors, students, teachers and scholars.

The Museum will be a central address for sharing curricula, textbooks, audiovisual materials and teaching techniques. It will also be instrumental in integrating the archival collections of Holocaust institutions throughout the world.

Q *How will the Museum be funded?*

A The Museum, by statute, must be constructed solely with private, donated funds. More than twenty million dollars had been contributed by the end of October 1985.

Q *Are contributions tax-deductible?*

A Yes. Public Law 96-388 makes contributions to the Museum tax-deductible. Checks should be made payable to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Every contribution is acknowledged. Pledges payable on a scheduled basis are also welcomed.

Q *What is the total amount of funds needed?*

A To build the Museum, the Campaign must raise $100 million. Of this, about twenty-five percent will be used to construct the 300,000-square-foot facility. Sixty percent will be used to equip the Museum with innovative exhibits; to acquire archives, artifacts, film and library collections; and to design a diverse range of learning resources, programs and sophisticated teaching tools. New technology is being explored for interactive learning displays and a computerized universal index and glossary network that would link Holocaust centers around the world and would support scholarship at the highest levels. Finally, the remaining fifteen percent will endow the Museum to provide for necessary initial operating costs.

Q *When will the Museum be open?*

A The Council has set the spring of 1989 as the target date for completion of the Museum.

"In building this Museum," said Elie Wiesel, "we feel we accomplish a mission the victims have assigned us: to collect memories and tears, fragments of fire and sorrow, tales of despair and defiance, and names . . . above all, names. Then we shall bring words. Even in Buchenwald and Treblinka, laboratories for total extermination, there were historians. It is our duty to take their message, keep it, study it, cherish it."

For further information, please contact:
United States Holocaust Memorial Council
2000 L St. NW. Suite 588
Washington, DC 20036 (202) 653-9220

The United States Holocaust Memorial Council

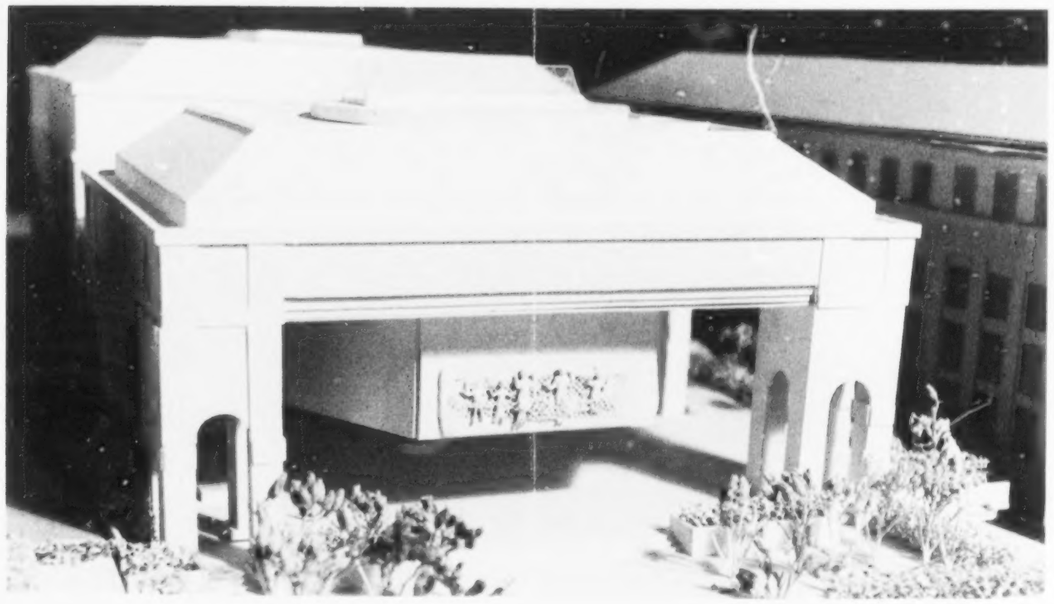
"Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that there is hereby established the United States Holocaust Memorial Council . . ."

With these words, the Congress of the United States in 1980 during the presidency of Jimmy Carter made, as an element of national policy, a commitment to institutionalize the official remembrance of the darkest chapter in modern history—the Holocaust.

To carry out this congressional mandate, the United States Holocaust Memorial Council was charged with the responsibility of fostering remembrance in two important ways: through the annual civic commemoration of Days of Remembrance of the Victims of the Holocaust; and by planning, raising funds for, and constructing the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

By law, all funds necessary to construct the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum must be contributed by private sources—individuals, corporations, unions and religious and civic groups. A Campaign to Remember was established to raise the necessary funds—$100 million. President Ronald Reagan is Honorary Chairman of the Campaign.

When this Campaign is successfully concluded and the Museum opens in 1989, the people of America will have created a resource of infinite educational and historical value—a Museum that will touch, inspire, awe and irrevocably change all who feel its influence.



United States Holocaust Memorial Council

(as of January 14, 1986)

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U.S. Park Service
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Research Assistant
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U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council
2000 L St. N.W., Suite 588 Washington, DC 20036
(202) 653-9220

A Campaign To Remember

President Ronald Reagan, Honorary Chairman
Miles Lerman, Sigmund Strochlitz, National Campaign Co-Chairmen
Dr. David Weinstein, National Campaign Director

1750 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 303
Washington, D.C. 20006
(202) 737-5000